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Est. 1760



Circle of Miguel de Santiago
(Quito, Ecuador, c. 1620/33 – 1706)

*The Holy Family with
Saint John the Baptist
and Saint Anthony the Abbot*

oil on copper
36 x 26 cm.; 14.2 x 10.2 in.

Provenance

Private Collection, United States.

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The work being presented here should be placed within the Quito school of the 17th century. In terms of its technical, aesthetic and stylistic characteristics, one might well attribute it to Miguel de Santiago, who was born in Quito in around 1620. This artist, who was one of the major exponents of the painting produced in the viceroyalty, was the most important painter in the court of Quito. The son of mestizo parents, he was legally adopted by Hernando de Santiago between 1633 and 1636. He enjoyed the patronage of the Augustinian friar Basilio de Ribera, who would commission him to undertake the canvasses of the life of Saint Augustine when the artist was about 20 years old. The painter married Andrea de Cisneros Alvarado in 1681 and died on 5 January 1706.

He obtained the rank of master painter much earlier than most, it is thought at some time between 1654 and 1656. He opened his workshop in property he inherited from his mother, located in the parish of Santa Bárbara, and he was involved in the training of Ecuadorian artists for more than half a century, until the day he died.

The training provided by Miguel de Santiago encompassed at least two generations, including painters who were of great assistance in the execution of his own works, such as in the Saint Augustine series, benefitting from the support of Bartolomé Lobato, Valenzuela and Fray Alfonzo de la Vera.

Víctor Puig demonstrated that Santiago's series depicting the life of Saint Augustine was inspired by Schelte a Bolswert's series of engravings on the same theme. He did so simply by publishing reproductions of the engravings and the paintings side by side, thereby creating the first series of parallels between colonial works of art and their engraved sources.

Ángel Justo Estebaranz also published a major study of the same series (along with its engraved sources), of which not all the works were known. This monumental series, originally made up of more than 60 canvasses, and intended to decorate the main cloisters of the convent, was completed in 1656.

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Miguel de Santiago left a large number of works that are still admired today. He undertook a number of famous series of paintings such as the abovementioned Saint Augustine series, the *Guápulo* and *El Quinche* ones, which are the main pieces in the temples of Quito, and in particular the one from the convent of San Francisco. The Holy Orders that commissioned his works mostly dedicated them to their saints of choice. Furthermore, we can find works by Santiago beyond the borders of Ecuador, as is the case of both the Cathedral and church of San Francisco in Bogota.

With regard to style, his work presents a painstaking pictorial quality characterized by a nimble brush and obsessive attention to detail. Certain peculiarities exist, both stylistic and physiognomic, that enable us to associate this copper piece with the work of Miguel de Santiago.

Below we include a number of significant, though by no means exhaustive, examples of his oeuvre that may serve as a frame of reference for the painting we are dealing with here, such as the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (fig. 1), the *Lamentation* (fig. 2) and, *Creed of the Descent to the Underworld* (fig. 3).

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Figure 1. Miguel de Santiago, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, oil on canvas. Cathedral of Bogota, Colombia

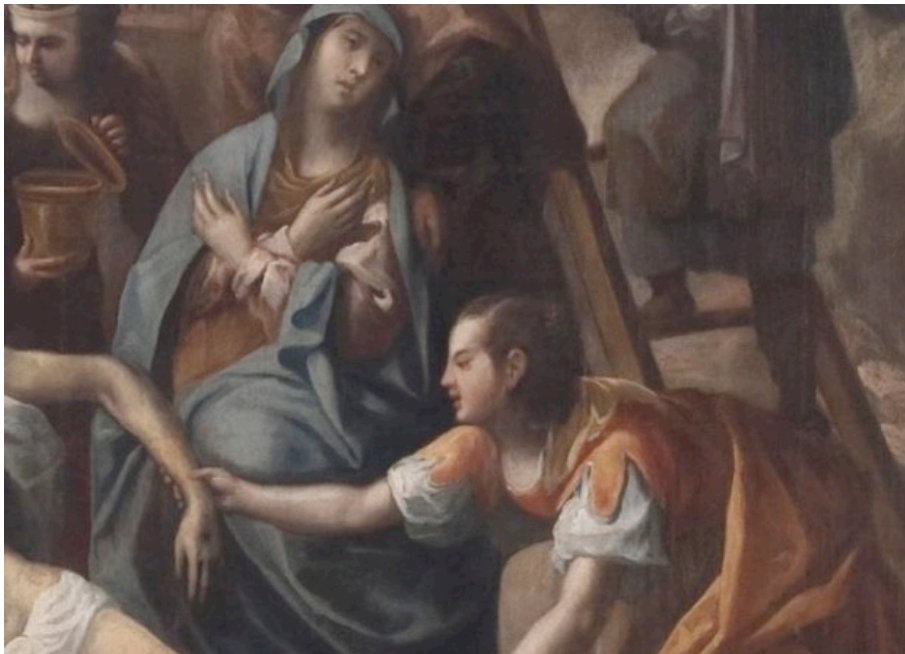


Figure 2. Miguel de Santiago, *The Lamentation* (detail), Cathedral of Bogota, Colombia

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Figure 3. Miguel de Santiago, *Creed of the Descent to the Underworld* (detail), Cathedral of Bogota, Columbia